(ii) BSNL has installed at least one Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) Basic Transreceiver Station (BTS) in 102 SDCAs out of total number of 120 SDCAs in Orissa as on 30.06.2006.

(iii) BSNL has planned to expand its mobile services upto Block Headquarters and villages having population more than 5,000. As on 30.06.2006, 203 Block Headquarters out of total number of 314 Block Headquarters have been covered by mobile services in Orissa. BSNL plans to add 3.00 lakh mobile connections in Orissa in 2006-07.

(iv) BSNL has floated a tender for expansion of its mobile network by 63 million lines. A significant portion of these additional lines will go to the rural areas of the country including that of Orissa.

(v) There are 37,706 internet connections by BSNL in Orissa. BSNL has plans to provide 10,700 internet connections in the year 2006-07.

Imposition of U.S.O. fee

1039. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the proposed Post Office (Amendment) Bill, 2006 mandates every service provider with Rs. 25 lakhs turnover should pay 10 per cent to help the Postal Department meets its Universal Service Obligation;

(b) whether the Competition Commission of India has asked the department to study its present cost structure and assess the burden of serving remote areas of the country, before proposing imposition of Universal Service Obligation fee; and

(c) whether the Commission has asked the department to explore the possibilities of cross-subsidising the likely deficit in serving remote areas from the lucrative segment services of the department?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Competition Commission of India while seeking clarity on the basis of which the figure of 300 gms. for the monopoly segment of letter mail has been arrived at, has inquired whether any detailed study of the cost structure of Department of Posts has been undertaken to determine the level of X-efficiency and to assess the extent of the present burden on the Department on account of USO.

The Commission has also sought clarity on why the likely deficit in catering to inaccessible areas and uneconomical routes cannot be met through cross-subsidization within the monopoly segment assigned to Department of Posts.

The draft proposal to amend the Indian Post Office Act, 1898 envisages that the Central Government may, by notification, specify the terms and conditions of the USO and its applicability to the registered service providers.

Indian Post Office (Amendment) Bill

1040. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Competition Commission of India (CCA) has found the provisions in the draft Indian Post Office (Amendment) Bill barring courier firms from carrying articles weighing less than 300 gms. as violative of the spirit of competition;

(b) whether the category of articles weighing less than 300 gms. accounts for 95 per cent of all mailed correspondence in the country; and

(c) whether the Commission has contended that such a move would foster State monopoly and deny a level playing field for the private sector courier firms?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) The Competition Commission of India while welcoming the move of the Department of Posts to dilute the exclusive right of conveyance of letters has commented on the fact that no option is provided to consumers for using any alternative service providers for letters below the 300 grams limit which many other countries have done subject to payment of higher charges.